

book. But for many of our citizens, these seemingly simple activities are impossible. This is so because they are illiterate. I am pleased that this resolution will be able to draw attention to the pressing issue of illiteracy. I thank my colleagues who have joined me in cosponsoring this important measure.

All of us should be more aware of the problem of illiteracy. A recent study found that over 44 million adults cannot read. An additional 35 million read below the level needed to function successfully in society. These numbers alone are alarming and warrant our special attention. But even more disturbing are the personal hardships people must face each day due to their inability to read. The embarrassment parents face when they cannot read to their children. The discouragement able workers feel when they cannot fill out a basic job application. The disappointment we all endure as the ranks of the illiterate grow annually by over 2 million adults.

Mr. President, the 18th century writer, Joseph Addison, once wrote "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." I couldn't agree more. Reading enriches our lives in countless ways. But there are far too many of our citizens who cannot read the instructions on a doctor's prescription bottle, let alone share the experience of reading one of Addison's great poems. This needs to change.

Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many citizens across the country who dedicate their lives to beating back the forces of illiteracy. I want to express my gratitude to the teachers, volunteers, parents, and others who donate their time and talent to help those who cannot read. In my own State of New Jersey, I want to give special recognition to Caryl Mackin-Wagner, executive director of Focus on Literacy, Inc., for her leadership on this issue. My thanks to all involved.

Mr. President, we must focus our attention on the problem of illiteracy. All of us should make sure we do our part to ensure that citizens who need help know where services are available. We need to recognize the detrimental effects illiteracy has on our society. Most important, more of us need to enlist in the battle to close the book on illiteracy.

Mr. President, for these reasons, I am very pleased that we passed this resolution establishing July 2, 1997, and July 2, 1998, as National Literacy Day.●

#### DIPLOMATS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT SOUTH ASIA BUREAU

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, during the 104th Congress, I was privileged to serve as ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs. In that time, while visiting and monitoring events in the South Asia region—which includes India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri

Lanka, and Bangladesh—I had the honor of working with a talented and dedicated group of diplomats. I wish to pay tribute to some of them today.

The South Asia Bureau is the smallest and youngest of the State Department's regional bureaus, having been created by congressional mandate in 1992. Despite its size, it has ably represented American interests in this critical part of the world. This summer, it will undergo its first major transition, as nearly all the ranking diplomats in the bureau will rotate on to other assignments. Before they do, I wanted to take an opportunity to commend them for their service.

At the top, of course, is Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Robin L. Raphel, the first person to ever hold the position. During the past 4 years, Assistant Secretary Raphel has deftly managed the complex web of issues that encompass South Asia—from Indo-Pakistani tensions to nonproliferation, from human rights to the environment, and from counterterrorism and narcotics to the deadly conflict in Afghanistan. She has also been a trusted and valuable interlocuter with Congress, making the administration's case fairly and straightforwardly to those on all sides of every issue under her purview.

Assistant Secretary Raphel has been assisted in her efforts by an outstanding team of ambassadors in the field: Ambassador Frank Wisner in New Delhi, Ambassador Tom Simons in Islamabad, Ambassador Peter Burleigh in Sri Lanka, Ambassador David Merrill in Dhaka, and Ambassador Vogelgesang in Kathmandu. Due to a quirk of timing, with the exception of Tom Simons, all of these ambassadors either have or are expected to vacate their posts this summer.

I want to commend each of these fine diplomats: Frank Wisner, one of the most senior and well-regarded members of the entire Foreign Service, and David Merrill, both of whom have announced their retirements from Federal service; Peter Burleigh, a native of my home State of California and a first-rate linguist, who will next be furthering United States interests as Deputy Permanent Representative at the United Nations; and Sandy Vogelgesang, for whom I have a special, personal regard.

Last November, when I traveled to Nepal to view United States assistance projects, I was highly impressed by Ambassador Vogelgesang's knowledge of Nepal and her depth of caring for its people, the high degree of respect she enjoyed throughout the country, and the way these traits enabled her to be an effective advocate and promoter of U.S. interests. She is, in short, one of the finest Ambassadors I have ever had the privilege of working with. I hope and expect that our Nation will enjoy the benefit of her service in future posts in the years to come.

Mr. President, during my tenure on the Foreign Relations Committee, I

have developed a high regard for the work of our talented and dedicated Foreign Service personnel. Almost without exception, I have found the people representing our Nation in embassies overseas to be infused with seriousness, patriotism, and professionalism. Sadly, they are too often underappreciated, and occasionally even criticized. As Senators, who are called upon to approve the highly competitive selection and promotion processes, and to confirm appointments to the Foreign Service's most senior levels, it behooves us to take the time to recognize some of our most accomplished diplomats.

On behalf of my colleagues, I express appreciation and admiration for a job well done to Assistant Secretary Raphel and Ambassadors Wisner, Simons, Burleigh, Merrill, and Vogelgesang. Our country owes them thanks for their able service, and we are grateful for their significant contributions to improving and expanding our relationships with the countries of South Asia.●

#### IMMUNIZATION OF DONATIONS MADE IN THE FORM OF CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1902 which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows.

A bill (H.R. 1902) to immunize donations made in the form of charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts from the antitrust laws and State laws similar to the antitrust laws.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be placed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1902) was passed.

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1997

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until the hour of 9:20 a.m. on Wednesday, June 25. I further ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, immediately following the prayer, the routine requests through the morning hour be granted, and Senator STEVENS be recognized for up to 10 minutes as if in morning business; that following Senator STEVENS' remarks,